



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 9, 2007

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PRESS RELEASE
***ARREST MADE IN INTERNATIONAL
PARENTAL KIDNAPPING CASE;
CHILDREN TO BE RETURNED TO UTAH***

SALT LAKE CITY – Two Utah children, kidnapped by their non-custodial father in mid-February, will be returned to Utah after an investigation spanning four countries led to the arrest of their father late last night in Vienna, Austria.

Vojko Rizvanovic, DOB 4-19-69, of Salt Lake City, a U.S. citizen originally from Macedonia, is charged in a federal complaint filed yesterday in Salt Lake City with one count of international parental kidnapping. The charge carries a potential maximum penalty of three years in prison. Federal prosecutors say Rizvanovic will be extradited to Salt Lake City to face the charges. The mother of the children, who lives in Clearfield, is flying to Vienna this weekend, to pick up her daughters, ages 3 and 5.

Participating in the investigation are the FBI, the Clearfield Police Department, the Davis County Attorney's Office, the U.S. State Department, ICE, and the U.S. Attorney's Office. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children also is assisting in reuniting the mother and her children.

According to a complaint filed in the case, on Dec. 6, 2006, a Third District Juvenile Judge in Salt Lake City found “emotional and domestic abuse by Vojko Rizvanovic against the children and their mother.” The judge ordered that custody and guardianship of the defendant’s daughters be awarded to their mother, Sabira Ahmic. The defendant and Sabira Ahmic were never married but lived together, according to the complaint.

On January 30, 2007, according to the complaint, the judge ordered that the custody and guardianship arrangement continue and gave the defendant expanded unsupervised visitation with the children. A visitation schedule allowing the defendant to have unsupervised visitation with the children from Feb. 9, 2007, to Feb. 12, 2007, was later approved. The defendant was to return the children to the Utah Department of Child and Family Services the morning of Feb. 12, 2007.

On Feb. 12, 2007, DCFS contacted law enforcement to report that the defendant had not returned the children as ordered. Officer Carey Stricker of the Clearfield Police Department contacted the FBI the next day, the complaint says.

FBI agents, working in connection with agents from ICE, tracked the defendant’s passport and discovered that he had flown from Los Angeles, California, to Sydney, Australia, on Feb. 10, 2007. They were able to confirm that the defendant was traveling with his two children.

According to the complaint, on Wednesday of this week, law enforcement officers were contacted by a person in Australia who advised them that Rizvanovic was en route to the airport in Sydney with his two daughters and that he intended to return to Macedonia.

The FBI was able to confirm that the defendant had a flight booked from Sydney on March 8, 2007, with a one hour layover in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, arriving in Vienna, Austria, at 6:10 a.m. local time on March 9, 2007. Law enforcement agencies in Australia and Malaysia helped track the defendant’s travel. Rizvanovic was arrested at the Vienna International Airport by Austrian Police in coordination with the FBI in Austria.

“The Clearfield Police Department, the FBI, the State Department and ICE, along with police departments and authorities around the world, worked together quickly over the last few days to bring this situation to a

successful conclusion. It was a relief to us all when the arrest was made last night. Each agency was prepared to expend whatever resources were necessary to reunite these young children with their mother,” said Brett L. Tolman, U.S. Attorney for Utah.

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